

January 27, 2004

Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
Hart Senate Office Building, Suite 112
Washington, D.C. 20510-0505

RE: Service to Country Reimbursement Act – S. 1845

Dear Senator Boxer:

On behalf of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara, we unanimously support the Service to Country Reimbursement Act. We also want to express our sincere appreciation for your leadership in sponsoring this bill.

Since October 2001 the City has voluntarily provided approximately \$250,000 in salaries, benefits and retirement fund contributions for City employees who have been called to active military duty. While we remain committed to this policy, we do not have unlimited resources. The City has not yet recovered from the revenue losses due to the economic recession and September 2001 terrorist attack. In addition we have incurred significant increased costs to provide higher levels of police security and emergency preparedness.

This situation in combination with the loss of revenue (incurred and projected) due to the California state budget crisis places us in a very untenable position. Although S.1845, if enacted, will not resolve all of these issues, it will provide resources to fund a major portion of our potential future costs for continuing support for our employees, and their families, who are activated for military service.

We encourage you to make enactment of this bill a high priority and ask that you call on us for support and advocacy with others as the bill progresses through hearings. Thank you again for taking the initiative to sponsor this bill.

Sincerely,

Marty Blum, Mayor

cc: J. Armstrong, City Administrator
D. Olson, City Special Projects Manager
City Council Members